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AUTHOR Patrick, Cathleen; Caruthers, J. Kent
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ABSTRACT

All U.S. college and university presidents were surveyed in 1979 to determine their priorities among planning and management improvements at their institutions. Questionnaires were mailed in December 1978 to all chief executive officers (president or chancellor), or chief executive officer for a system of colleges, universities, and central offices listed on the 1977-78 Higher Education General Information Survey. Though nearly one-third of all public institutions responded, less than one-fifth of private institutions did. Among the three institutional types, universities had the highest response rate (33 percent), followed by two-year institutions (28 percent), and by four-year institutions (25 percent). Public universities and public four-year colleges had the highest response rates (38 percent), and private two-year colleges the lowest (14 percent). Based on 900 returned and usable questionnaires of the total 3,327, the highest priority areas were: (1) communicating institutional strengths to potential students, their parents, and the general public; (2) communicating institutional strengths to the state legislature and state budget officials (for public institutions); (3) integrating program-review results in program-planning and budget processes; (4) resource allocation and reallocation; (5) faculty vitality and renewal; (6) implementing institutional goals and objectives through the planning and budgeting process; and (7) forecasting institutional revenue needs more accurately. Most of these high priority areas were interpreted as reflecting the current environment of retrenchment and the need to prepare for a no-growth or slow-growth era. (SW)

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MANAGEMENT PRIORITIES OF COLLEGE PRESIDENTS

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Cathleen Patrick

J. Kent Caruthers

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National Center for Higher Education Management Systems
P. O. Drawer P
Boulder, Colorado 80302

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ABSTRACT

All U.S. college and university presidents were recently surveyed to determine their priorities among planning and management improvements at their institutions. Based on 900 returned questionnaires, the highest priority areas were: (1) communicating institutional strengths to potential students, their parents, and the general public; (2) communicating institutional strengths to the state legislature and state budget officials (for public institutions); (3) integrating program-review results in program-planning and budget processes; (4) resource allocation and reallocation; (5) faculty vitality and renewal; (6) implementing institutional goals and objectives through the planning and budgeting process; and (7) forecasting institutional revenue needs more accurately. Most of these high priority areas were interpreted as reflecting the current environment of retrenchment and the need to prepare for a no- or slow-growth era.

The National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS) recently surveyed over 3,000 college and university presidents to determine their priorities among planning and management improvements at their institutions. This paper reports the results, based on 900 returned questionnaires.

The NCHEMS survey is only one of several recent attempts to determine how college and university presidents are preparing their institutions for the future. In Presidents Confront Reality (1976), Glenny et al. reported results of a 1974 survey in which they attempted to ascertain how presidents were "responding to actual (or projected) downturns in enrollment and finances" (p. 109). Their survey was sent to all U.S. institutions except those that offered degrees only in religion and enrolled fewer than 125 students. System-level offices were also excluded.

Several national associations that poll their membership periodically include questions about management needs. The American Association of Community and Junior Colleges (AACJC) asked presidents of member institutions in August 1978 to identify their problems; subsequently Templin and Ross attempted to determine the ways in which these problems were related to institutional control, size and the nature of the institution service area. In 1978, the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) surveyed member institutions on many management-related concerns, although their effort focused on state-related issues. In the same year, the Council for the Advancement of Small Colleges surveyed its membership as an aid to its program-planning activities. Though management-related, this survey identified preferences among dissemination methods rather than research and development activities.

A different procedure for determining research needs in higher-education administration is through a panel of experts. In the summer of 1976, the National Institute of Education (NIE), with the assistance of NCHEMS, convened a group of 28 leading researchers and institutional, state and federal administrators to identify needed research on finance, productivity, and management in postsecondary education (NIE, 1978). Similarly, the National Institute of Independent Colleges and Universities (NIICU) used its Research Advisory Council to determine priority issues for the 1980s in the areas of government policies, institutional management, clientele, and finance (1978). Perhaps the most comprehensive attempt using a panel of experts was that of the Coalition of Postsecondary Education Research Interests. Under the general coordination of the American Council on Education, representatives from a number of higher-education organizations have worked through various task forces to establish priority research needs in finance, management, and 10 other areas. The recent NCHEMS survey appears to be the most comprehensive effort in recent years to consider the needs of top management in colleges and universities. Covering all categories of institutions, it focused exclusively on management concerns.

METHOD

Questionnaire

The questionnaire shown as Figure 1 was organized into nine general management areas, with four to six specific questions within each area. (A tenth area, regarding preferences for various kinds of management training was included for use by NCHEMS staff, but is not described here.) Respondents were asked to assign priorities regarding administrative needs for their

Figure 1

Survey Instrument

NCHEMS Management Needs-Assessment Survey

Please assign priorities from your own perspective regarding the needs of administration at your institution. All responses to this questionnaire will be kept confidential and reported only in summary form.

If you would like to clarify your response to any question, please do so in the margin or in an attached letter.

My priority for each of the following is: *(Please check appropriate box indicating your priority)*

1. Better management ideas or approaches for:

	LOW			HIGH
a. mission, role and scope statement development	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. assessment of institutional and program needs	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. faculty vitality and renewal	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. resource allocation and reallocation	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. other (specify)_____	☐	☐	☐	☐

2. Better ways of communicating our strengths to:

a. potential students and their parents	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. faculty/staff	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. board of trustees	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. state legislature	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. state budget officials	☐	☐	☐	☐
f. general public	☐	☐	☐	☐
g. other (specify)_____	☐	☐	☐	☐

3. Better information and tools to evaluate the impact of faculty demands regarding:

a. salaries	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. promotion policies	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. workload	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. facilities	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. governance	☐	☐	☐	☐
f. other (specify)_____	☐	☐	☐	☐

Please check if your faculty has or has under consideration a collective bargaining agent ☐

4. Improved procedures for estimating revenue needs that reflect changes in:

a. total enrollment	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. mix of enrollment (part-time students, adults, etc.)	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. program emphases	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. personnel commitments	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. other (specify)_____	☐	☐	☐	☐

5. Improved procedures for integrating affirmative action concerns in decisions about:

a. personnel policies	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. salary policies	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. admissions policies	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. program development	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. other (specify)_____	☐	☐	☐	☐

6. Improved procedures for integrating academic program review (assessment) results in:

a. budgeting	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. institutional self-studies	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. program planning	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. staffing	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. other (specify)_____	☐	☐	☐	☐

7. Improved procedures for projecting enrollment:

	LOW			HIGH
a. for the institution as a whole	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. by program	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. of part-time versus full-time students	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. of adult versus traditional-aged students	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. by sex and ethnic group	☐	☐	☐	☐
f. other (specify)_____	☐	☐	☐	☐

8. Improved methods for implementing institution-wide goals and objectives in:

a. budgeting	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. program planning	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. program development	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. tenure policy	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. other (specify)_____	☐	☐	☐	☐

9. Data and analytical reports on topical problem areas of:

a. state and local tax support of higher education	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. characteristics of adult learners	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. program availability	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. labor force availability by race and sex	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. other (specify)_____	☐	☐	☐	☐

10. Improving skills of administrators through:

a. overview training covering most aspects of the planning and management process	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. in-depth training in specific areas such as financial planning, academic planning, budgeting, etc.	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. on-campus training using external consultants	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. regional training seminars	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. short-term in-residence programs at NCHEMS	☐	☐	☐	☐
f. other (specify)_____	☐	☐	☐	☐

11. Please list any other high-priority areas for research and development in the administration of higher education.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

NAME _____

INSTITUTION _____

ADDRESS _____

_____

When complete, please refold this questionnaire to expose the self-addressed stamped mailer and return to NCHEMS

institution on a five-point scale for each item. For each general management area, a space was left for respondents to add related, high-priority issues at their institution, and an open-ended question was asked at the end of the questionnaire regarding "other high-priority areas for research and development in the administration of higher education." Respondents were also asked to indicate their name, institution, and address.

It should be noted that the range of topics on the survey instrument represented only one subset of the many problems facing college and university presidents and that this subset was heavily (and intentionally) biased toward planning and management.

Sample

Questionnaires were mailed on December 4, 1978, to all chief-executive officers of colleges, universities, and central offices listed on the 1977-78 HEGIS (Higher Education General Information Survey) Institutional Characteristics tape. Names and addresses for the study were generated by selecting administrators coded either 01, chief-executive officer (president/chancellor), or 02, chief executive officer for a system. Duplicate names of administrators were eliminated, resulting in a total mailing sample of 3,327. No follow-up mailing was conducted.

RESULTS

Response Rate

Nine hundred usable questionnaires were returned by the cut-off date for the survey (February 7, 1979), for an overall, adjusted response rate of 27.3%. Since 16 questionnaires were returned by the postal service as

undeliverable, the base number of questionnaires, 3,327, was adjusted to 3,311 before computing the response rate. Table 1 shows the response rate (by level of offering and control) from the 869 (33 central offices and 836 institutions) questionnaires for which names and addresses of respondents were given. Thirty-one other questionnaires that were returned anonymously lacked the institutional information necessary for classification by control and level.

Though nearly one-third of all public institutions responded, less than one-fifth of private institutions did. Among the three institutional types, universities had the highest response rate (33%), followed by two-year institutions (28%), and by four-year institutions (25%). Public universities and public four-year colleges had the highest response rates (38%), private two-year colleges the lowest (14%).

Analysis

Results from the 900 questionnaires were analyzed in terms of rank order of priorities for each of the 40 issues within the nine general management areas. The numbers 1 through 5 were assigned to low through high priority ratings for each president, and then averaged for each issue across institutions, central offices, and institutional sectors. These means were then ranked from 1 to 40 (1 indicating the highest priority) for purposes of comparison. Table 2 shows the resulting ranks for each issue for all institutions and all central offices as well as for public and private institutions and the six combinations of control and level of offering (universities, four-year colleges, and two-year colleges). Table 3 shows similar results summarized for each of the nine general management areas of the questionnaire,

Table 1

Response Rate[a] by Level and Control

(N = 836 institutions and 33 central offices for which level and control could be identified)

Institutional Control	Central Offices			Institutional Level of Offering											
				Universities			Four-Year			Two-Year			All Institutions (central offices excluded)		
	n	N	%	n	N	%	n	N	%	n	N	%	n	N	%
Combined	12	43	27.9	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
Public	20	83	24.1	37	96	38.5	180	469	38.4	300	931	32.2	517	1579	32.7
Private	1	28	3.6	16	65	24.6	266	1341	19.8	37	255	14.5	319	1689	18.9
All Institutions	33	154	21.4	53	161	32.9	446	1810	24.6	337	1186	28.4	836	3268	25.6

[a]Response rates would be slightly higher if the 31 questionnaires for which there was no identification were included in the appropriate categories.

Table 2

Rank Distribution for Questionnaire Items by Sector

Question	All Institutions	Public	Private	Public			Private			Central Offices
				Univ.	4-Yr	2-Yr	Univ.	4-Yr	2-Yr	
1. Better management ideas or approaches for										
a. Mission, role and scope statement development	31	34	27	39	28	37	32	27	30	30
b. Assessment of institutional and program needs	12	11	13	20	12	*8*	15	13	12	*10*
c. Faculty vitality and renewal	*3*	*5*	*5*	*7*	*4*	*5*	*1*	*6*	*9*	13
d. Resource allocation and reallocation	*7*	*7*	*10*	*4*	*8*	11	*2*	*9*	18	*1*
2. Better ways of communicating institutional strengths to										
a. Potential students and their parents	*1*	*3*	*1*	*5*	*3*	*3*	*2*	*1*	*1*	14
b. Faculty/staff	18	20	19	12	16	23	20	19	11	27
c. Board of trustees	25	24	22	15	20	26	29	23	17	24
d. State legislature	14	*1*	37	*2*	*2*	*1*	39	36	39	*2*
e. State budget officials	21	*4*	40	*3*	*5*	*4*	40	40	40	*7*
f. General public	*2*	*2*	*3*	*1*	*1*	*2*	*4*	*4*	*4*	*5*
3. Better information and tools to evaluate the impact of faculty demands regarding										
a. Salaries	22	25	16	23	27	24	22	16	16	20
b. Promotion policies	27	31	23	29	30	32	28	22	21	29
c. Workload	20	21	17	18	22	22	*8*	17	19	17
c. Facilities	34	38	29	35	37	38	32	28	27	33
d. Governance	28	29	26	31	29	29	31	26	25	32

Table 2 (continued)

Rank Distribution for Questionnaire Items by Sector

Question	All Institutions	Public	Private	Public			Private			Central Offices
				Univ.	4-Yr	2-Yr	Univ.	4-Yr	2-Yr	
4. Improved procedures for estimating revenue needs that reflect changes in										
a. Total enrollment	13	18	*9*	30	21	15	21	*10*	*3*	19
b. Mix of enrollment (part-time students, adults, etc.)	19	19	21	22	19	17	17	21	23	22
c. Program emphases	17	15	18	17	18	16	*7*	18	21	18
d. Personnel commitments	24	26	20	14	26	25	18	20	20	23
5. Improved procedures for integrating affirmative action concerns in decisions about										
a. Personnel policies	29	27	28	21	23	30	13	30	27	28
b. Salary policies	32	35	32	34	31	36	19	32	31	34
c. Admissions policies	40	39	34	37	39	39	27	34	34	40
d. Program development	36	36	33	40	38	34	25	33	29	36
6. Improved procedures for integrating academic program review (assessment) results in										
a. Budgeting	*4*	*6*	*7*	*6*	*10*	*9*	*10*	*5*	*10*	*3*
b. Institutional self-studies	15	17	14	24	17	18	11	14	14	15
c. Program planning	*9*	*8*	11	*8*	*9*	*10*	*5*	11	*5*	*9*
d. Staffing	16	16	15	16	14	20	16	15	15	12

Table 2 (continued)

Rank Distribution for Questionnaire Items by Sector

Question	All Institutions	Public	Private	Public			Private			Central Offices
				Univ.	4-Yr	2-Yr	Univ.	4-Yr	2-Yr	
7. Improved procedures for projecting enrollment										
a. For the institution as a whole	*8*	14	*2*	28	15	*6*	26	*2*	*2*	21
b. By program	11	*10*	12	*10*	13	*7*	*6*	12	13	11
c. Of part-time versus full-time students	23	22	24	26	24	19	23	24	26	26
d. Of adult versus traditional-aged students	26	23	25	25	25	21	23	25	24	25
e. By sex and ethnic group	38	37	36	32	40	35	37	37	35	37
8. Improved methods for implementing institution-wide goals and objectives in:										
a. Budgeting	*5*	12	*4*	*9*	*7*	14	11	*3*	*8*	*8*
b. Program planning	*6*	*9*	*6*	11	*6*	12	*8*	*7*	*7*	*4*
c. Program development	*10*	13	*8*	13	11	13	14	*8*	*5*	*6*
d. Tenure policy	39	40	30	33	33	40	29	29	36	39
9. Data and analytical reports on topical problem areas of										
a. State and local tax support of higher education	33	28	39	19	32	27	35	39	38	16
b. Characteristics of adult learners	30	30	31	36	36	28	36	31	33	31
c. Program availability	35	32	35	38	34	31	38	35	31	35
d. Labor force availability by race and sex	37	33	38	27	35	33	34	38	37	38
N	867	517	319	37	180	300	16	256	37	33
Mean for Rank No. 40	2.7	2.6	2.0	2.3	2.7	2.3	1.7	2.1	1.6	2.5
Mean for Rank No. 1	4.4	4.4	4.6	4.5	4.4	4.4	4.3	4.5	4.7	4.5

a. The "N" for all institutions includes 31 questionnaires for which insufficient institutional information was provided to classify by control or level.
b. The top 10 ranked topics are shown in italics.
c. Tied means were each assigned the higher rank value.

Table 3

Means and Rank by Sector for the
Nine General Management-Information Areas

General Area	All Institutions		Public		Private		Public						Private						Central Offices	
							Univ.		4-Year		2-Year		Univ.		4-Year		2-Year			
	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank
1. Managerial Change	3.8	(3)	3.8	(4)	3.8	(2)	3.4	(4)	3.8	(3)	3.8	(4)	3.6	(1)	3.8	(2)	3.6	(4)	3.8	(3)
2. Communicating Strengths																				
a. general audience	3.9	(1)	3.9	(2)	3.9	(1)	3.9	(2)	3.9	(2)	3.9	(2)	3.5	(3)	3.9	(1)	4.1	(1)	3.6	(5)
b. state-level audience	3.6	(5)	4.3	(1)	2.3	(10)	4.4	(1)	4.2	(1)	4.3	(1)	2.9	(8)	2.3	(10)	1.8	(10)	4.3	(1)
3. Information to Evaluate Faculty Demands	3.3	(8)	3.2	(8)	3.5	(6)	3.0	(7)	3.2	(8)	3.3	(8)	2.9	(8)	3.3	(7)	3.4	(7)	3.2	(8)
4. Procedures for Estimating Revenue Needs	3.6	(5)	3.6	(5)	3.6	(5)	3.2	(5)	3.4	(6)	3.7	(5)	3.3	(4)	3.6	(5)	3.6	(4)	3.4	(6)
5. Procedures for Integrating Affirmative Action Decisions	2.9	(9)	3.0	(10)	2.8	(8)	2.7	(9)	3.0	(9)	3.0	(10)	3.1	(7)	2.8	(8)	3.0	(8)	2.8	(10)
6. Procedures for Integrating Program Review Results	3.9	(1)	3.9	(2)	3.8	(2)	3.6	(3)	3.8	(3)	3.9	(2)	3.6	(1)	3.8	(2)	4.0	(2)	4.0	(2)
7. Procedures for Projecting Enrollment	3.5	(7)	3.5	(5)	3.4	(7)	3.1	(7)	3.3	(7)	3.7	(5)	3.0	(6)	3.4	(6)	3.6	(4)	3.3	(7)
8. Methods for Implementing Goals and Objectives	3.7	(4)	3.6	(5)	3.8	(2)	3.2	(5)	3.8	(3)	3.5	(7)	3.3	(4)	3.8	(2)	3.7	(3)	3.8	(3)
9. Data and Analytical	2.9	(9)	3.2	(8)	2.7	(9)	2.8	(8)	3.0	(9)	3.3	(8)	2.3	(10)	2.5	(9)	2.6	(9)	3.0	(9)
Number of Respondents	867		517		319		37		180		300		16		266		37		33	

Where tied means were observed, all were assigned the higher rank; ranks were assigned from 1 to 10 because area two (communicating strengths) was subdivided into two parts.

with mean priority rankings as well as ranks displayed. Note that question two was subdivided into communicating strengths to general and state-level audiences, resulting in a total of 10 major questionnaire areas.

Two other subgroups were examined for rank differences: enrollment and region of the country, each divided into four subgroups. Differences among the four groups were sufficiently small for both enrollment and region so that the results are not presented in tabular form.

The following generalizations provide a frame of reference for interpreting the rank order of priorities among the 40 issues:

- A question ranked among the top 10 generally had mean ratings between 4.0 and 5.0; that is, between moderately high and high priority
- Rank assignments between 11 and 20 generally correspond to means between 3.5 and 4.0; that is, they were substantially above the middle point on the rating scale
- Between ranks of 21 and 30, means were slightly above the midpoint of the scale (between 3.0 and 3.5)
- Ranks in the bottom 10 (less than 31) were generally derived from means somewhat below the midpoint of 3.0

The high priority generally placed on these questions indicates, perhaps, that the set of items selected for this questionnaire were among the more important issues facing college presidents today. An analysis of each issue and general management-area summaries follows.

Managerial Change

The four questions comprising the first general management-information area can perhaps best be unified by the active managerial-change theme evident

in each. Assessment of institutional and program needs; faculty vitality; and resource allocation; and, to a lesser extent, mission, role, and scope statement development all are issues requiring action on the part of an institutional manager. In contrast, most of the other eight areas focus primarily on themes of improved information in one form or another (communication, information to evaluate faculty demands, estimating revenue needs, topical reports). Table 2 shows that better approaches for the development of mission, role, and scope statements were rated of uniformly low priority across sectors (generally in the bottom 10). Presidents in most sectors rated assessment of institutional and program needs relatively high--between the top 8 to 15--except for public university presidents, who rated this issue 20th. Faculty vitality and renewal were among the top 10 priorities for all groups except central-office, chief executive officers, who generally have less direct involvement with faculty concerns and problems. Private-university presidents, in fact, rated faculty vitality as their first priority. Resource allocation and reallocation also received generally high ratings. Chief executive officers from all sectors, except for presidents of the still-growing two-year sector (ranks of 11 and 18, respectively), rated this issue among the top 10. Resource allocation was the first priority among the 33 central-office respondents.

Of the 10 general areas in Table 3, managerial change was third for institutional presidents and central-office chief executive officers. In the various sectors, the area was uniformly high--between second and fourth throughout each of the 10 general areas. The write-in responses for this topic included changing missions, assessment of community needs, fiscal controls in time of austerity, fund raising, marketing, long-range planning,

exemplary practices, identification of new publics, and administrative vitality and renewal.

Communicating Strengths

The general areas of communicating institutional strengths was subdivided into two areas--general and state-level audiences--because priorities for public and private institutions varied so greatly to the two state-level questions yet were very similar for the four other questions. For presidents of all three types of public institutions and for central offices, communicating strengths to the two state-level audiences (budget officials and legislature) was the highest priority area of the 10 listed in Table 3. For private institution presidents, as might be expected, this concern was rated among the very lowest. The general management area of communicating strengths to the four other audiences (students and parents; faculty/staff; trustees; public), on the other hand, was ranked uniformly high across sectors, with the exception of central-office chief executive officers, who ranked it fifth.

Table 2 shows that the questions regarding communicating strengths to potential students and their parents on one hand, and to the general public on the other, were first and second priorities among all presidents of private institutions and were rated in the top five across all institutional sectors. For public-institution presidents, the primary issue was communicating strengths to the state legislature. This issue was also in the top two across university, four-year, and two-year public sectors. Communicating strengths to state budget officials was also of high priority for presidents of public institutions (in the top five across sectors). The remaining

two questions in this area (communicating strengths to faculty and staff and the the board of trustees) were rated of moderate priority among the 40 issues. Ranks were in the middle quartiles across all institutional sectors for both questions.

Central offices closely resembled public institutions in their responses to this area with one exception, question (2a): communicating strengths to potential students and their parents. Given the generally similar responsibilities and concerns of presidents of public institutions and chief executive officers of central offices, the overall pattern of agreement between the two sets is not surprising especially since 32 of the 33 central office responses were from public or combined public and private institutions. Many presidents added other audiences of importance in communicating strengths. The most frequent write-in audiences were alumni or potential donors. Others included the media, accrediting associations, the business and industrial community, the federal government, high-school guidance counselors, church constituents, employers, local sponsors, foundations, other colleges, present students; and potential adult students.

Information and Tools to Evaluate Faculty Demands

The general area of better information and tools to evaluate faculty demands received ratings of moderate to low importance overall. Each of the five questions in this area were ranked below 15, and sometimes as low as 38. There were no major differences across institutional sectors or between institutions and central offices. Respondents offered several comments concerning faculty tenure, consulting, reduction-in-force, ratios to students, productivity, nonsalary benefits, and evaluation.

As can be seen in Figure 1, a question on the instrument asked whether respondents had, or had considered, a collective-bargaining agent. Of the 842 presidents who responded to the topic, 187 (22%) answered affirmatively. The authors analyzed responses separately for those with and without a collective-bargaining agent but found only minor differences in the priority rankings of this general area between the two groups.

Estimating Revenue Needs that Reflect Changes in Enrollment

Of the 10 major areas on the questionnaire, estimating revenue needs that reflect changes in enrollment was fifth in priority overall, with very little variation across sectors. The four subparts to this topic were also assigned moderate priority (ranked generally between 15 and 25) with only several notable exceptions. Presidents of private institutions gave considerably higher rating (rank of 9) to enrollment projections for the institution as a whole than did those of public institutions (rank of 18) or central offices. Moreover, a trend emerged, across level of offering, for projection of total enrollment for both public and private institutions; universities rated the issue lowest, four-year institutions rated it somewhat higher, and two-year institutions rated it highest. Thus presidents of private, two-year colleges assigned the highest priority to this issue (third in priority among all 40 issues).

Among the comments of respondents regarding improved procedures for estimating revenue needs were state-aid formula, inflation, degree of sponsorship, market demands, and the impact of retirement at age 70.

Procedures for Integrating Affirmative-Action Concerns in Decisions

As Tables 2 and 3 illustrate, the topic of improved procedures for integrating affirmative-action concerns in decisions about personnel, salary, and admissions policies and program development received very low priority overall (and for each of the four questions--most ranks were in the bottom 10 or 20 in priority. Taken at face value, the result seems surprising that institutional and central-office, chief executive officers apparently place a low priority on affirmative action. An examination of the written comments for this topic revealed that in many cases respondents interpreted the question as referring to operational procedures (rather than executive policies and concerns). Since most respondents already have developed procedures specifying affirmative-action policies for admissions, personnel, and salary administration, it seems that part of the explanation for the low ranks lies in the wording of the question. Write-in comments such as "all well-prescribed in Pennsylvania," "accomplished," "no problems with this area," and "have been done and are of low priority now" support this reasoning. Some comments indicated that the low ranking did not indicate a lack of concern but rather that other issues had a higher level of urgency that required a more immediate need for assistance.

Other comments, which were also in response to the affirmative-action question itself, may indicate other types of procedures needed: section 504, occupational entry programs, student profile, staff selection, tenure, faculty and administrative level recruitment, and concerns of the handicapped.

A number of affirmative action-related concerns were listed under the final, open-ended question asking for "other high-priority areas for research and development." These write-in comments indicated a concern with broader

concepts of equity (encompassing issues of equal educational and employment opportunity) rather than being limited solely to ways to respond affirmatively to external factors and requirements. Examples of some of these needs expressed in response to question 11 were:

- Effects of focused HEW integration plans in higher education
- Part-time faculty rights, governance, and so forth
- Evaluation of administrators, faculty, staff
- Implementing change--particularly reductions
- Characteristics of student enrollment

In summary, respondents seemed to literally interpret the affirmative-action question, giving it a low priority. Yet further analysis revealed that this interpretation did not indicate lack of interest or concern about the general area, but rather indicated the adequacy of current legally required procedures.

Procedures for Integrating Program-Review Results

Taken as a whole, the area of improved procedures for integrating the results of academic-program review tied communicating institutional strengths to general audiences for first priority among the 10 general areas. This topic was ranked one, two, or three across all sectors. However, there were clear distinctions in the four parts of the question. Program-review results for budgeting and program planning were of higher priority than were results for institutional self-studies and staffing. The latter two areas were ranked between 10 and 20 across sectors, while the former were among the top 10 or 11 in all cases. The two comments written in for this topic did not indicate new areas in which program-review results might be integrated.

What is perhaps most striking about this and the other top-rated topic (communicating institutional strengths to general audiences) is the high degree of consensus across sectors. Virtually no comments were added to the program-review topic by respondents--perhaps indicating that the four subquestions listed on the questionnaire encompass the full range of issues important to college and university presidents in the area of program review.

Procedures for Projecting Enrollment

The topic of procedures for projecting enrollment was ranked between fourth and seventh priority among the ten topics across the various sectors. For institutional presidents as a whole and for central-office, chief executive officers, it was ranked seventh.

There was considerable variation within the five subquestions for this topic and across sectors in the relative rankings assigned. Table 2 shows that procedures for projecting enrollment of part-time students, adult students, and sex and ethnic groups were all ranked in the bottom half of the 40 questions. For these three issues, consensus was high among presidents of different sectors.

The two other enrollment-projection questions (for institutions as a whole and by program) were assigned substantially higher priority (ranks of 8 and 11, respectively, for all institutional presidents combined). There were some interesting sector differences for these two issues. Presidents of private four-year colleges and public and private two-year colleges ranked enrollment projection for the institution as a whole of very high priority (in the top 6), while central office and university presidents ranked it as much less important, ranking it in the 20s. Projecting

enrollment by program showed almost the opposite trend: universities ranked it in the top 10, while other sectors ranked it slightly lower (except for two-year colleges, which ranked it 7th). These trends most likely reflect the relative degree of sophistication with management and information tools at institutions of varying complexity; i.e., more complex institutions wanted to project enrollment at the program level, while less complex institutions wanted to project enrollment at the level of the institution as a whole.

Write-in comments asked for enrollment-projection procedures for foreign students, states, senior citizens, residents and nonresidents, and the 1980s.

Implementation of Goals and Objectives

Improved methods for implementing institution-wide goals and objectives was ranked fourth of the 10 general areas on the questionnaire, and varied between second and seventh across sectors. Presidents of public, two-year colleges ranked it lower (7th) than others.

Table 2 shows a variation across sectors for three of the four questions under this general topic. Agreement was high across sectors regarding the low priority of implementing goals and objectives in tenure policy. The other three questions (budgeting, program planning, and program development) were frequently among the top 10 across sectors and never ranked lower than 14th. Presidents of private, two- and four-year colleges; and of public, four-year colleges; and central-office heads placed somewhat higher priority on all three of these issues than did other groups.

Written comments from respondents included procedures for implementing goals and objectives in retirement policies, long-range planning and goal development, multiyear contracts, and research.

Data and Analytical Reports

There was almost universal agreement among respondents that data and analytical reports on the four topical areas listed in the questionnaire were of low priority. Whether the four issues listed were relatively unimportant to respondents or were considered important but already available is not clear. It is clear, however, that chief executive officers of all types placed a higher priority on developing procedures or mechanisms for managerial change than on reports and data-analysis results.

Written suggestions by respondents asked for reports on emerging occupations, comparative costs, interpretation of data for use in management decisions, time studies of weighted tuition and other costs of attendance, job-market shifts and projections, and the effects and implications of financial aid.

Conclusion

An analysis of 900 survey responses from college and university presidents reveals that the more pressing R&D needs in postsecondary-education administration concern:

- Communicating institutional strengths to external audiences
- Integrating program-review results in program-planning and budgeting processes
- Resource allocation and reallocation
- Faculty vitality and renewal
- Implementing institutional goals and objectives through the planning and budgeting process
- Forecasting institutional revenue needs more accurately

Though these topics were strong priorities across all institutional categories, important differences by category may help in designing individual R&D projects.

The higher-priority topics can be interpreted generally as the expression of a need to prepare for a no- or slow-growth era. The need to communicate more effectively with both potential students and the general public can be interpreted as a desire to maintain an institution's market share of enrollments. The need to communicate more effectively with state budgetmakers, to better allocate resources, and to forecast revenue requirements more accurately indicates the deteriorating finances of many institutions. The strong interest in faculty vitality and renewal reflects, in part, the fewer dollars available for new faculty positions and the resulting low turnover among faculty. Even the presidents' interest in integrating program-review results and implementing goals and objectives with ongoing planning and budgeting processes suggest their expectations of belt-tightening and retrenchment. These generalizations are reinforced by analysis of individual questions within the broader categories: presidents expressed a greater need to integrate program-review results in the budgeting process than in making staffing decisions.

Several interesting questions remain unanswered. It is not yet known what types of support presidents feel they need to respond to the pressures described above. Should resources be focused on better dissemination of existing approaches, should the existing approaches be tailored to the no-growth scenario or to particular types of institutions, or should entirely new R&D activities be undertaken?

For some researchers, the more interesting questions may be in understanding why some areas received lower priority. If data monographs that would report a variety of trends in college and university practices are not useful to the college president, why are so many special inquiries conducted by telephone or so many contacts made at professional meetings about the practices of other institutions? Does the buyer's market in hiring faculty explain the relatively lower priority for the series of faculty-related concerns in the questionnaire? More investigation will be necessary to answer these questions.

As noted earlier, other attempts have been made to identify research priorities for postsecondary-education administration. Did the NCHEMS survey produce any new findings? A direct comparison between the survey results and those of the various panel of experts attempts is difficult. The panels typically established priorities only within rather than across subtopical areas and, in some cases, considered a broader range of topics than did the NCHEMS survey. However, there does appear to be a high degree of correspondence among the major issues. For instance, the NIE Conference on Finance, Management, and Productivity assigned higher priorities to such management issues as coordinating budgeting and planning and current relationships between postsecondary education and the general public--topics that have direct links to the survey priorities of better communications and implementing goals and objectives through budgeting.

A direct comparison with the previous surveys is similarly limited. Within AASCU's top 10 state-issue priorities, however, one finds such topics as appropriations, enrollments, comprehensive and master planning, budgetary process, and faculty and staff development. These issues compare to

faculty vitality, communicating with the legislature and state budget officials, and implementing goals through budgeting that were major concerns of the public institutions in the NCHEMS survey. One of CASC's questions concerned possible topics for their workshops. Student attrition and recruitment, program analysis, fund raising, student learning outcomes, and a marketing approach to program development were the higher ranked issues. Each of these topics has counterparts in the top priorities for private institutions revealed in the NCHEMS survey.

To some extent, the NCHEMS survey produced few surprises in its identification of R&D needs. Its principal contribution is its greater currency and its comparison of results across institutional sectors.

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